

CARL DOLMETSCH
CONCERTS,
Jesses,
Haslemere,
Surrey.

THE CONSORT

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Centenary of Arnold Dolmetsch's birth



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FOREWORD

WE are most grateful to Mabel Dolmetsch for allowing us to include the ninth instalment of her Personal Recollections and for the photographs she has provided with her habitual generosity.

This issue of *THE CONSORT* is designed to mark the centenary of Arnold Dolmetsch's birth and contains some personal recollections by his three children, given in the order of their ages and specially written for the occasion. Also a few personal anecdotes from Miss Ruth Daniells, who has been so closely connected with the Dolmetsch Movement for so many years.

Lastly, a representative choice from the many writings concerning Arnold Dolmetsch, one, an extract from Gerald Hayes' book (now unfortunately out of print) and an article by Edwin Herrin who fully appreciated one aspect of his life-work from the point of view of a layman.

We also wish to express our gratitude to Mrs. Gerald Hayes and to Mrs. Edwin Herrin for permission to rescue these from oblivion.

The Editor.

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This copy is No.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

BY

MABEL DOLMETSCH

PART 9

ON THE COMPLETION of our storm-tossed voyage, we made our way thankfully to Falcon Farm (the abode of my youngest brother, Alex), situated amid charming wooded country, about five miles distant from Faversham. Arnold followed next day, having stayed behind to see the last of our goods loaded on to a Maple's van, to be held in storage until a suitable dwelling could be found.

As some concert engagements were due to be fulfilled within a few days of our arrival, Arnold, with *extraordinary* celerity, obtained a small flat in Bloomsbury. This, equipped with hired furniture, formed a convenient headquarters for such of us as were taking part; while Carl, then aged two and a half, remained at Falcon Farm with his French nurse. The first of these engagements took place on February 23rd, and consisted of a celebration of the Birthday Anniversary of Samuel Pepys, held in the great Hall of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Arnold, Cécile and I, having first dined handsomely with our cordial and vivacious hosts, were conveyed thither, together with our virginals, lute and viols. On our arrival we were welcomed by Professor Dent, who escorted us to the lovely old Musicians' Gallery. The body of the hall was entirely lit by wax candles, whose tender luminosity added to the charm of the sombrely rich, panelled walls.

Many eminent musicians were among the guests, including (as I remember) Sir Hubert Parry and Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. While the feast was proceeding, we, looking down benignly upon this distinguished gathering, performed appropriate seventeenth century music, (both vocal and instrumental) of the kind termed by Thomas Mace "solemn, sweet, delightful ayres." These included Samuel Pepys's own composition, entitled "Beauty Retire", sung by Cécile to the accompaniment of lute and viol.

At the close of the banquet, the speeches followed; and, at this point, Arnold, leaving the gallery, mingled with his fellow musicians in the hall below.

One of the great ones, unfortunately, opened his discourse with the words: "I'm afraid I don't know anything about Pepys"! This put too severe a strain upon Arnold's forbearance; and when it came to his turn to contribute "a few words", an irresistible sparkle came into his eyes as he announced blandly: "Well! I *do* know something about Pepys!" He thereupon gave a delightful and informative talk concerning the enthusiastic musical life of Samuel Pepys and his associates. He could never quite understand why so many English people prefaced their apologies with "I'm afraid"; and told me that the first time one of his pupils began a letter with the words: "I'm afraid I shall not be able to come for my lesson", he was frankly puzzled, and asked naïvely: "What is this man afraid of?"

On our return to London, we set about house hunting. Houses were not so hard to come by in those times as nowadays; and after two days of prospecting, we found a highly suitable one which would be at our disposal in a month's time. It was situated at the foot of Parliament Hill, being thus in close proximity to Hampstead Heath. The owner of this house was one of those rare people who still believed that the Earth was flat! We did not argue the point, seeing that in all other respects he appeared to be a reasonable and accommodating person.

Meantime Arnold, with burning activity, embarked on a course of London concerts in which the three elder children participated. The hall of Clifford's Inn was each time crowded to the limit of its capacity, the audience being, in our estimation, as interesting as the performers. On one occasion there was a positive galaxy of remarkable personalities in attendance, including in their midst Violet Gordon Woodhouse, Blanche Tollemache, Robert Steele, Lord and Lady Howard de Walden, Mr. and Mrs. George Bernard Shaw, Neville Lytton, Granville Barker and H. G. Wells.

By March 25th the Hampstead house was ready for occupation, and Arnold, after supervising the delivery of our household goods, engaged the services of a weird cook who had at one time (so she said) been cook at the Spanish Embassy. Owing however to her addiction to the bottle, she had to be precipitately replaced by a sober French woman, who by a strange contrariety had once been the custodian of a hotel wine cellar. Having collected all our children from various kind relatives, we settled into this pleasant house. A few days later,

in some unaccountable way, Arnold received a letter from the mother of one of his early pupils from the Dulwich College days, saying how much she longed "once more to shake his hand on this side of the grave." He responded promptly, inviting her to tea. The dear old lady arrived with her daughter, the one-time pupil. She enjoyed herself extravagantly, revelling in reminiscences and eating a hearty tea. Some strange intuition must have prompted her to this last merry-making; for on the following day she died!

During the ensuing weeks we renewed contact with many friends, including the Muirheads (who had left America shortly after our exodus), plus Robert Steele, with his erudite co-editor of the *Russian Year Book*, Miss Peacock by name, and a host of kindred souls from among the members of the Art Workers' Guild.

Going for a stroll one day, we almost collided round a corner with the poet Sturge Moore and his French wife Marie, a kindly and almost childlike couple, overflowing with hospitality. They forthwith organized a dinner party for us and other mutual acquaintances. It was a goodly feast; but I can still visualize the struggles of poor Sturge Moore, as he endeavoured to dismember some rather muscular ducks. It took him a long time, filled in by the sympathetic guests with sprightly small talk. After dinner we adjourned to the sitting-room and fell to discussing the *pros and cons* of the Suffragette movement, Arnold's fellow Art-Worker (Alfred Powell) being on the side of the *pros* and Arnold, contrariwise, leaning over to the *cons*. Thence we drifted towards the Irish Theatre, a subject dear to the heart of W. B. Yeats, at that time badly in need of financial support, in order to be able to launch some plays of particular interest. It was suggested that he should apply to Miss Annie Horniman, whereupon he exclaimed with some acerbity: "Good heavens, no! Miss Horniman and I haven't spoken to each other for *years*!" whence we deduced that their erstwhile collaboration had been severed with some abruptness.

At the invitation of his host and hostess, Yeats then turned to lilting some of his own poetry. That is to say, he *thought* he was lilting it; but, as Arnold remarked to me afterwards, he was really only droning it on one note. Strange to say, despite his acute rhythmic sensitiveness, his ear for music was dreamily monotonous.

In the latter half of April, 1914, the Art Workers' Guild held their Friday meeting in the ancient hall of Clifford's Inn

for the *last time*, the lease being by then expired. The premises in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, were almost ready for occupation, and included a well-proportioned central hall wherein, to Arnold's great contentment, he had the privilege of giving the first concert.

Our life throughout this period was most eventful, the children, for their part, entering into it with great zest. At the urgent request of Miss Kathleen Schlessinger they gave a concert, organized by themselves, at the Earl's Court Exhibition, where Miss Schlessinger was exhibiting a number of Oriental wind instruments, concerning whose technique and peculiar scales she had made considerable research. The children carried their performance with great aplomb. At one point Arnold, who had been lurking in the wings, came forward to say: "Rudolph is asking if he may play that piece over again." This request was greeted with loud applause; so Rudolph had the gratification of repeating the said piece to his own satisfaction.

One day, as I chanced to witness some light-hearted frolicking and dancing among the children, it suddenly occurred to me that here was my opportunity to realize for Arnold a long-cherished dream; namely an ardent desire on his part to actually *see* the dances which once went in partnership with the enchanting music of the Renaissance period and onward for another hundred and fifty years or more.

Heeding Arnold's shrewd advice, I began with the later examples, consisting of those set forth by Feuillet in the admirably ingenious dance notation, invented by Monsieur Beauchamp, ballet master to Louise XIV. Thence I gradually worked backwards in time, with very rewarding results. Such was Arnold's delight that for a while he even included a section of dances in his concerts. This was, I think, due to a wish to gratify his friend George Bernard Shaw who, some years previously, had embodied in his critiques a protest that it was not of much use for Arnold Dolmetsch to describe all these ancient dance forms unless one had a chance to see the actual dances performed. This reflection may conceivably have lingered also in Shaw's memory; for when he at last beheld some of these characteristic dances (pavans, galliards, basses-danses, branles, rigaudons, canaries, etc.) he showed a lively appreciation, and was heard to exclaim: "This is obviously the genuine thing."

Our constant friend and encourager at this time was Robert Steele. Not only did he attend every one of our concerts in

and around London, but made a point of introducing to Arnold all such interesting characters as he came across in the course of his own venturesome activities. These chance acquaintances included a Russian sculptor of considerable renown, then domiciled in America, bearing the suitably adapted name of Joe Davidson. He had come to England in response to a number of requests from famous people, desirous of being handed down to posterity in plaster, stone or marble.

Davidson was at once captivated by Arnold's uncommon type, and offered to produce a bust for the mere pleasure of it. Arnold, strange to say, submitted to this ordeal, and the sculptor plunged into his task with full confidence. Little did he realize the baffling mobility of his model's facial expression. When the bust was completed, what did we see? An admirable portrait of Rabindranath Tagore! The sculptor, not to be outwitted, began to tinker with it, modifying here and there, but to no avail. Finally he whittled it down to just a mask, which was included in Davidson's grand London exhibition. Therein were displayed some likenesses of many notable people, including those of President Wilson, Lord Northcliffe, May Morris, Robert Steele, and the sculptor's own wife and children. When we arrived, in due course, before the elusive mask, we shook our heads regretfully. It was, nevertheless, included among the noteworthy examples of the sculptor's art that were exhibited in the illustrated Press. Showing a reproduction to our unsuspecting children, we enquired of them archly: "Who is this?" They examined it attentively, and then confessed that they had no idea!

Arnold was obviously an unusually tricky model. In years gone by, attempts at his portrayal had been made by various friends, including William Rothenstein and Blanche Tollemache. When the latter proudly displayed her achievement, Arnold bluntly declared that he could detect no resemblance. Nettled by this setback, she retorted with: "Ah! But you see, I have *idealized* you." I recollect that, during the early years of our acquaintance, Arnold told me that his physiognomy had once been cleverly pictured under two startlingly opposite aspects. First he had posed as the Christ, and subsequently as the Devil, under which contrasted guises he was ultimately represented in the stained-glass windows of a church. I wish I had asked him where was this church, and who was the artist!

With regard to Joe Davidson, we should be much beholden to him; since where he eventually failed, the snap-shot expert

stepped in most successfully. One day, whilst Arnold was whiling away the tedium of his protracted posing with intermediate bouts of jovial conversation, (interspersed with tunes on the newly cultivated recorder,) an American friend of Davidson came to see him. This visitor was the eminently successful photographer Alwyn Langden Coburn, a positive genius in his own sphere, who, during the following year, being still resident in England, was elected President of the Royal Photographic Society. This young man (never without a pocket camera) seized upon the opportunity provided by Arnold's lapses from rigidity to take a series of quick photographs of his vividly expressive and ever-changing countenance. A selection from among these will aptly illustrate our story!

Some weeks later, Coburn visited us, in company with his charming wife and his passionately devoted mother. On this occasion he took some photographs of the family which now form delightful souvenirs of that picturesque period. The elder children are shown in their dancing attire, whilst Carl appears, peeping through from behind my skirts. He had now reached a highly impressionable stage, musically. During rehearsals the children were always encouraged to come and listen, which procedure enabled them to develop much musical understanding. An illustration of this came to me one day when I observed Carl rolling on the floor beneath the harpsichord, singing, the while, a portion of the *second violin* part of a Bach concerto.

On one of his visits, Coburn brought with him his friend Ezra Pound, the budding American poet, a strange young man of rather flamboyant appearance. He became much interested in the English music of bygone centuries and, above all, attracted towards its exponent, Arnold Dolmetsch, who left upon him a lasting impression. This attachment found utterance some thirty years later, when he embodied in his *Pisan Cantos* (composed whilst in a detention camp near Pisa) the following stanzas:—

Ere the season dies a-cold
Borne upon a Zephyr's shoulder
I rose through the aureate sky
Lawes and Jenkins guard thy rest
Dolmetsch ever be thy guest.

Has he tempered the viol's wood
To enforce both the grave and the acute?
Has he curved us the bowl of the lute?
Lawes and Jenkins guard thy rest
Dolmetsch ever be thy guest.

Around this time we made the acquaintance of a very attractive Swedish lady, named Mrs. Sturge (a cousin by marriage of Sturge Moore), and accepted her invitation to give a concert in her house in Richmond. On the appointed day she came to fetch us in person, the instruments having been sent on in advance. Three distinct circumstances have engraven this occasion on my memory.

I give them in their order as follows:—

First, as we were preparing to leave home, Mrs. Sturge called out that there was a rivulette running down the staircase. This startling discovery apprised us of the fact that, not only had someone left a tap running, but also that the bathroom washing-basin was not furnished with an overflow pipe. When we reproached our odd landlord with this omission, he replied that he had left it thus on purpose, so as to teach people to be careful!

The second event was of a pleasant nature. It consisted of our first meeting with that remarkable and much travelled man, Monsieur Guéritte, who, it will be remembered, 25 years later, during the Second World War, became president of the French protective organization in England known as "Les Français de Grande Bretagne."

The third outstanding circumstance connected with our Richmond excursion was that Rudolph, then aged nine years and two months, accompanied, from the figured-bass part, a Bach violin suite (played by his father), with the ease of a mature musician.

This suite was subsequently repeated at one of the London concerts at 6, Queen Square. Among the audience was Sir Henry Wood, who had doubtless heard from Arnold of Rudolph's musical gifts. Unable to restrain his curiosity, he rose from his seat and, mounting the platform, stood behind the imperturbable Rudolph, to convince himself that his eyes and ears had not deceived him. I who was seated nearby, noted the pleased smile that overspread the face of this warmhearted, kindly man.

Naturally Arnold's first concern, when he had settled into our Hampstead home, was to establish a workshop on the lines of such as he had formerly organized in Bloomsbury. The most commodious room in the house was set aside for this purpose; and it was arranged that Ericsson should join us in the autumn. Meantime, in order to launch the enterprise, Arnold composed,

and thereafter circulated among his musical acquaintances, an alluring announcement, from which I quote some extracts.

"Many people would take pleasure in having a Virginal or Spinet. They are as charming for pieces as grateful for accompaniments; one never tires of playing on them or with them. Their beautiful decorative form, their size, which is small enough to fit any room, and their lightness, which makes it easy to carry them about, add to their attractiveness. The crispness and facility of their touch renders them ideal for students; it develops that sensitiveness and nimbleness of fingers which is the despair of piano players, and it replaces the dreary hours usually spent in pursuit of technique by the performance of enjoyable and mind-improving music..."

"In former times no English home was complete without one. Samuel Pepys writes in his diary on 2 September, 1666, at the time of the great London fire: 'River full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three, that had the goods of a house in it, but there was a pair of Virginals in it'..."

"The question of price has not yet been solved; but Mr. Dolmetsch has made studies and experiments which have convinced him that, if made in sufficient numbers, they could be obtained at a price available to many. He has organized an efficient workshop and he now proposes to make a virginal of a simple form, without costly decoration, yet pleasing to the eye, with a compass of five octaves (sufficient for all the music up to Beethoven, and a good deal besides) at a cost not exceeding 25 guineas, if not less than twelve orders are given."

This was indeed an example of the buoyant optimism which (come what may) supported Arnold through fair weather and foul. For it soon transpired that these delightful instruments could not be made at a profit for 25 guineas! Those orders that were received immediately had, perforce, to be delivered at that price. Shaw's was among these; but learning some time later of the miscalculation, he wrote to Arnold in terms of gentle admonition, and enclosed therewith the appropriate balance.

Naturally, the outbreak of the 1914 war halted the influx of orders; thenceforth, therefore, the price was adjusted so as to admit of a living wage for the creator of this very popular and serviceable instrument, which is nowadays known as a triangular harpsichord. This name is indeed quite appropriate; for although in form it resembles that of a slightly foreshortened three-cornered spinet, instead of producing only one colour of tone (as with both the spinet and virginal), it can vary its timbre, harpsichord-wise, by means of two pedals. In common parlance, its name is frequently shortened into triangle, which adaptation is not so crude as it may seem, seeing that Samuel Pepys himself alludes to his own spinet in the following words:—

"This day my tryangle, which was put in tune yesterday, did please me very well..." (March 16th, 1663).

"...Home, calling on the virginal maker, buying a wrest for myself to tune my tryangle, and taking one of his people along with me to put it in tune once more, by which I learned how to go about it myself for the time to come." (March 18th, 1663).

Although Arnold was disappointed in his expectation of the arrival of Ericsson, owing to war conditions, he carried on



PORTRAIT OF ARNOLD DOLMETSCH



ARNOLD DOLMETSCH WITH RECORDER
(showing changes of expression)

bravely, though more slowly than he had expected, with his instrument making. Herein he was assisted by myself, as of old, and also to some extent by the younglings who became quite deft at the lighter jobs that had formerly been my speciality.

Hand in hand with this work, Arnold was still carrying on with the completion of his book on the *Interpretation of the Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries*, now almost ready for publication by Novello & Co. His proof reader herein was Ernest Newman, who became so fascinated as each instalment reached him, that (as he himself averred), he could hardly wait for the next to arrive. He came to visit us in person and invited us to give a concert in Birmingham, wherein the whole family took part. Thus a strong bond of friendship grew up, which has since never wavered.

At this distance of time it seems to me incredible that so many activities were carried on, turn and turn about. Besides those above mentioned, they included musical instruction to various pupils, great and small, also the tuning and upkeep of other people's instruments; while, in addition to the routine concerts personally organized, there was a good sprinkling of outside engagements.

Noteworthy among these was a concert forming part of a Bach Festival, undertaken by a Belgian conductor named Verbruggen; which concert included the concerto for the violino piccolo (with 3 oboes and 2 horns). Among the violinists of the orchestra, none could be found ready to play the part on the violino piccolo; whereas Verbruggen *would not* consent to have it played, as some suggested, in the upper reaches of an ordinary violin. Suddenly one of their number said: "What about Dolmetsch?" On being approached, Arnold readily consented and played the part at short notice on an exquisite little Amati violino piccolo, whose slender, silvery tones glittered throughout the solo passages. In the tutti, however, against the large orchestra, which mustered 8 double basses, it was not always distinguishable.

Another concert followed in which Arnold and Violet Gordon Woodhouse were the soloists, in the C minor concerto for two harpsichords. The harpsichords used were twin instruments, made in the Gaveau factory, of which one belonged to Violet and the other to Arnold. This gave rise to an amusing quandary; for Violet was unable to decide which of the two instruments she preferred. Arnold, who knew that there was nothing to choose between them, but could not resist an impulse

to tease, urged her to make her choice! Going back and forth from the one to the other, she became quite bewildered, and at last appealed to him, saying: "Which one do *you* like best?", to which he replied: "I must not tell you that, or you would be sure to suspect me of keeping the best one for myself." Perceiving the absurdity of this *impasse*, she elected to keep to her own instrument, and all went well. Some years later she succeeded in acquiring the other harpsichord also; but we never heard whether it was ever decided which was the better.

Despite the war, life went on much as before for a considerable time, with all these deeply interesting activities holding us in their grip. The first violent jolt came with the news from my sister Annette Henderson of the loss of her first-born son after three weeks at the Front. This brilliant young man had but lately completed his university education, and had been looking forward to a career of great promise. When, however, he came to visit my brother Alex at Falcon Farm, where I was enjoying an autumnal holiday in company with three-year-old Carl, he was already in uniform and (full of enthusiastic self sacrifice) was awaiting with impatience the call to go forth in the spirit of a knight errant, to fight in his country's cause.

Somehow the preceding Boer War had seemed so much more remote. With no personal contacts involved, our main concern at that time had been the resultant increase in income tax to eightpence in the pound. Whereas this sudden catastrophe, coupled with Robert Steele's loss of a son at about the same time, constituted a shattering blow (repeated for me 22 years later by the death of my own son, Rudolph, in the Second World War).

The Belgian artists and musicians who had succeeded in escaping to England, after the German invasion of their country in 1914, were enthusiastically welcomed by the Art Workers' Guild, which body accorded them honorary membership throughout the period of their exile. A reception was organized in their honour at which a short concert (given by Arnold, assisted by Beatrice Horne, Marie Thérèse and myself) seemed to afford them much pleasure. They told us that the last of their company, able to effect his escape, had been Ysaye, who had made the crossing in a fishing-boat. Having had a trying journey, he was too exhausted to attend the reception. It was a very thrilling evening, with everyone keyed up to intense emotional excitement. The Guildmaster of that year, named Thomas Okey, was a highly cultured man, who made a

speech of welcome in excellent French. The concert ended with the national anthems of England and Belgium, played by Arnold and a Belgian musician respectively, after which the artists of the two countries fraternized over coffee and cakes.

In the autumn of 1914, the Victoria Hall (nowadays known as the Old Vic, and formerly a music-hall) was re-opened by Miss Lilian Baylis as a theatre for the people, with a goodly number of seats priced at fourpence. We had the privilege of being present on that occasion and were impressed by the ardent enthusiasm shown, in her opening address, by this far-sighted lady.

On April 23rd of the following year, namely the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday, we gave, at her invitation, an afternoon of Shakespearean music and dances. Our performance was warmly appreciated by the uncommonly interesting audience, some of whom came to talk to us behind the scene afterwards. Among these was the elder brother of our dear Marie-Thérèse, (a French diplomat), who expressed the keenest delight at our performance. This rather surprised me, for the reason that, nearly two years previously, on learning that his sister was taking lessons from me on the ancient dances, he had, in company with his mother, strictly forbidden her to indulge in this pastime. He had even gone so far as to say that he would be compelled to resign his post in the diplomatic service, were it to become known that his sister had danced in public! The vitality and charm, however, of these interesting and characteristic dances, in combination with their beautiful music, seemed to have cast a spell upon him and entirely changed his point of view. His sister was not with him on this occasion, having returned to France for some war work.

During the Old Vic's first year of functioning, various noted producers gave their services; after which time, the organization was placed entirely in the hands of Ben Greet for an unbroken period of two and a half years, with excellent results. Thus we had the pleasure of witnessing many performances there, principally of Shakespearean plays, in which two of the shining lights were Sybil Thorndike and her brother. Never have I seen such a gruesome Caliban as that depicted by Russell Thorndike. Our children took great delight in these plays, which to them appeared to open out a vista of endless games, wherein (dressed up with much ingenuity) they figured as the prominent characters. *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, which we had the opportunity of viewing from a ground-floor box, adjoining the stage,

worked them up into tremendous excitement; and when Brutus discarded his armour prior to running himself through with his sword, Rudolph turned to his sister Nathalie and muttered: "Do you think I could climb down and take that armour, if he doesn't want it?"

The privilege of attending these dramatic performances, so well produced, constituted a valuable factor in the education of our children, broadening their outlook to a remarkable degree. This we perceived when, in the following year, we took part in William Poel's production of Ben Jonson's play *The Poetaster*, wherein we performed a sword dance. At the conclusion of the dance we retired from the scene and took our places among the audience. We realized that, to the children, such a play as *The Poetaster* might appear somewhat prolix, by comparison with the concise and pithy style of the Shakespearean plays. But did these young things grow weary? Not in the least! Moreover, during the episodes of boisterous comedy, Rudolph's laughter rang out so loud and clear that the people in front of us stared round in surprise.

In 1916 we had the pleasure of attending the Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration at Stratford-upon-Avon, where, at the invitation of Ben Greet, who had charge of the proceedings, we gave two performances of the contemporary music and dances. Carl was now deemed of an age to take part herein, having some months previously both sung and danced at a concert given in aid of the Serbian Hospital. When it came to the scene of the ecstatic vision of Queen Catherine of Aragon (*King Henry VIII*), whilst I, with the three elder children, mimed the part of the visionary beings "solemnly tripping" and, by turns, holding above her head the wreath of benediction, Carl (suitably camouflaged with voluminous draperies) represented the dying queen. This scene was commented on in the press as being particularly effective, the reporter asking why, in the usual stage productions, did not the portrayers of this scene simply follow the stage directions, as we had done, instead of inventing some quite unsuitable, fantastic dancing.

The appearance of the first Zeppelin gave us a considerable shock. It occurred late one evening as we were retiring for the night. A spectacular duel developed between the Zeppelin and the cannon surmounting Parliament Hill. Very cleverly the Zeppelin remained just barely out of reach; and when one of the shots almost hit it, it created a smoke screen and faded from our sight. Gradually the retaliative technique developed,

until finally one was brought down near Potter's Bar. Still we did not seriously believe in the possibility of fleets of militant aeroplanes superceding the Zeppelins! But one day when I purposed going shopping in the heart of London, Arnold, with prophetic foresight, said: "*Now mind*, if you should see a bevy of aeroplanes overhead, *don't* stop to see which kind they are; but immediately take shelter." Sure enough, as I was walking down Tottenham Court Road, I suddenly looked up and beheld a flotilla of grey aeroplanes in mass formation. So I walked into Catesby's store and said: "I think there's an air raid on." They gasped at me incredulously; suddenly, however, dull thuds made themselves heard, and then all turned into hysterical clamour. So I made my way out, despite their protests, and descended the spiral staircase of the underground railway, into the very depths, where all was silence and stillness. I think I must have been the first person to take refuge in the underground railway. Gradually these raids increased in frequency, causing very disturbed nights. All street lamps were painted dark blue; and we had to depend upon the moon for comfortable night travelling.

In September, 1917, I, and the three younger children, were invited by Beatrice Horne to spend several weeks with her, in her cottage at Thursley, Surrey. Writing to Arnold one day, I mentioned that Beatrice was planning to let her cottage, and return to her London flat, for the autumn and winter. I received a prompt telegram saying: "Stay where you are. Cécile and I will join you." Accordingly, a few days later, Arnold and Cécile, accompanied by auxiliary furniture and various musical instruments, arrived by lorry. Arnold described the terrible night they had experienced prior to receiving my letter, during which the aeroplanes had come over London seven times. He strongly advised Beatrice not to return to London; but, with a light-hearted laugh, she replied that she was not afraid of bombs!

The premises attached to the cottage included a spacious out-house which afforded facilities for the continuation of Arnold's work of instrument making. Hence we felt that this had been a most wise move.

One day as he and I, conversing in French, were walking along near Witley Camp, we were overheard by some French-Canadian soldiers, who greeted us with enthusiasm. They told us that they were stationed at the camp, awaiting the call to go over to France. Meantime, whole bands of them came along to visit us on Sundays; and, seated on the floor of our living room,

they conversed in their own antique French idiom. Our hospitality had to take the form of cigarettes, as most articles of food were now rationed. One of their number was a Sergeant MacKnight, (a cousin of Loeffler, the violinist) who had formerly been a member of the Boston orchestra, as flautist. Consequently this bond of union brought about a cordial friendship. On one occasion the Sergeant brought along one of his superiors, named Major Coulter, an interesting and pleasant man. This meeting resulted in their engaging us to visit their camp and give them a concert. Our reception there was stupendous, all available space being occupied, and some of the overflow climbing on to the rafters. A point of interest was that among the ancient French songs, sung by Cécile, several had survived as popular songs in Canada, and were known to these men, though long since forgotten in their country of origin.

Following on this performance, we were invited to dinner a month later, on a Sunday, by their Colonel Barri, at which feast the British General Swift himself presided. After the parsimony we had been exercising throughout many preceding weeks, this lavish hospitality was positively dazzling, the menu including untold luxuries. At the close of this banquet we adjourned to a cosy sitting-room where we entertained the General and his attendant suite of French-Canadian officers with music and dancing. Rudolph played some tunes on the recorder, and displayed his prowess in a fencing bout with a Lieutenant Le Bel who, not realizing that Rudolph had received some expert coaching in this art, was taken off his guard and had to acknowledge himself *touché*. Rudolph went home laden with a huge bag of sugar. As to Carl, it was agreed that they would have liked to keep him as their mascot!

At the end of October, Arnold and I were due to journey to Ireland for a short concert tour. So, confiding our young family to the care of Beatrice's trusty housekeeper, we started on this rather perilous adventure. On arriving at Liverpool late in the evening, we found that our point of departure was a close secret, only to be revealed at the last instant. Finally, we were told to board a train for Holyhead, whence we embarked for Kingstown. This tour was throughout a delight. Everywhere we met with the greatest kindness, and were greeted with cheerfully smiling faces. It was not possible to take large instruments on this trip; so we contented ourselves with lute, recorder, octave virginals and treble and tenor viols. We also included some dances in our programme.

From Kingstown we journeyed down to Wexford, where we found a warm welcome. Everyone seemed so pleasant and well-mannered. I call to mind the courteous landlord who bowed so gracefully, and how (on my having commented on the delicious Irish bread) he presented us, on our departure, with a well-packed basket of provisions including two newly-baked Irish loaves. We continued our journey southwards, although unable to accomplish the entire tour, owing to war-time difficulties of transit. Our visit to Cork was memorable. First, after taking our places in the railway carriage, we were surprised by the last-minute entry of six stalwart policemen. They explained, with hearty laughter, that they were not acting as our escort, but had been drafted to Cork, where there had been some local upheaval. They settled down to play cards continuously throughout the journey. At each halting place, however, people with agonized faces peered at us through the windows, evidently imagining that we were under close arrest!

We journeyed the whole way through lovely scenery, heightened by some curious atmospheric effects such as I have never seen anywhere else, and which seemed all in keeping with the interesting traditions and fantastic legends, relating to the "little folk" and other mysteries.

In Cork we were struck with the beauty of the people in general, their clear, bronzed complexions, glowing eyes and shining black hair, and, above all, by the sweetness of their voices. Even little ragged boys who ran after us in the streets, wishing us a merry Christmas (although it still wanted another six weeks before that event), looked like infant poets and sounded like little angels.

Our chairman at the concert was the Mayor of Cork, who gave a fluent opening speech in the Irish language. Although we could not follow its drift, the sound was so pleasing to the ear as to suggest the stanzas of a poem. One feature with regard to this audience which especially impressed Arnold was their remarkable quickness in the uptake of all his explanatory remarks and humorous parentheses. Moreover, although we had no written programme, yet they obviously caught and retained even the names of all the pieces performed. We had a demonstration of this the following morning when we entered a store to buy some Irish bacon. The man who served us said how much he had enjoyed the concert, adding: "and the piece I liked best of all was that one called *La Caccia*" (a two-part Fantasy by Thomas Morley).

From Cork we went straight northwards to Dublin and, once more, had a pleasant reception. The food was not so appetizing there as it had been farther south, the bread being scanty and rather dry; but the people were agreeable. Arnold was solemnly warned to avoid all reference to religion and politics, to neither of which he would ever have thought of alluding! We introduced some 16th century dances on this occasion, which seemed to be well liked; and the organizer of the concert invited us to his house afterwards to meet some Irish prize-medal dancers. He asked me to dance "Nobody's Jigg" for them to see; as he had observed that, instead of holding the arms and body rigid and concentrating attention wholly on the feet, I had moved head, body and limbs in a pliantly inter-related manner. Afterwards, the Irish dancers performed some rants and reels for us, characterized by such amazingly rapid and intricate footwork that, actually, one's eyes became riveted on the feet to the exclusion of all else.

We were asked to go on to Belfast; but, finding that the date proposed would have prevented us from fulfilling a year-old engagement in Reading, we reluctantly declined this invitation.

The return journey was most uncomfortable, as we pursued a wildly zig-zag course, to avoid the imminent danger of being torpedoed. There were some cavalry soldiers sleeping on deck, wearing life-belts, which precaution seemed at variance with the spurs attached to their boots. Luckily they were not put to the test, and we all landed safely at Liverpool docks in the bleak early morning light.

After a hideous train journey in a carriage packed with soldiers who had been celebrating to excess their impending departure overseas, we made our way to hospitable little Thursley, where we were greeted by our cheerful children with various table delicacies prepared by themselves. Thenceforward life flowed smoothly for us in this little village, and having decided to make this part of the world our settled home, we set about househunting.

Feeling strongly drawn to the neighbouring town of Haslemere, we made this place the prime focus of our search. Not only had Arnold, some twelve years previously, visited George Bernard Shaw in Hindhead, and been struck by the beauty of its surroundings, but also, more recently, while still living at Tanza Road, Hampstead, we had given a concert in central London for the "Peasant Arts Society" whose headquarters were situated in Haslemere. Our chairman on that occasion was

Mr. Joseph King, M.P., who made an appreciative and amusing speech at the close of the performance.

Prospecting therefore from the vantage point of Thursley, we eventually found the "Perfect House", with the name of "Jesses". It owed this name to the fact that it stood on territory which had once formed part of a large farm where, in the Middle Ages, they reared hawks (the word "jess" signifying a leather strap fastened to the legs of the hawk and affixed to its perch, or to the hand of its owner). In this auspicious house, Arnold, prophetic as usual, announced that he would live out the remainder of his earthly life.

CECILE DOLMETSCH'S PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS
OF HER FATHER

WITH MY MOTHER'S delightful recollections of Arnold Dolmetsch so fresh in our minds, it is not easy to add anything that will bear comparison. However, I will try, and I will begin with what I remember of the early times when we lived in the white rough-cast house with green shutters which my father designed and built in Cambridge, Mass. The garden was planned after the French manner and the flowers were grown from seed specially imported. I have a vivid memory of waking very early in the morning to hear my father calling outside the window below, and of running barefoot down to the garden where everything was delicious at that hour. The paths had little wooden edgings and he had made us a swing and trapeze, surrounded by soft sand, on which I marked out a system of dance notation. I had a theory that everything was possible if one could find the way to accomplish it; and having perhaps inherited an inventive turn of mind, I thought out such inventions as a coat of invisibility made of dust and a live doll made from a worm. Fortunately, although I collected quite a lot of dust, I never got to work on the worm!

It was really my mother who started teaching me the treble viol when I was about four years old. The reward after a lesson was usually raisins, but this came to be considered rather babyish. When my father took over, one of the first things I can remember learning was that ornament known as the "Double Relish", consisting of two trills a semitone apart joined by a turn and ending with a mordent, described by Thomas Mace in "Music's Monument". Thomas Mace says that "the Well and True Performance of it upon several keys throughout the Instrument was accounted an Eminent piece of Excellency". Whether I achieved a "well and true performance" of it then is doubtful, but I have never forgotten it; and certainly after that, mere simple trills have always seemed easy!

It was of course A.D.'s policy to teach us with real tunes instead of exercises. One of my first pieces was the one I called "Le Joli Air" (A.D.'s Romance for the cello), graduating to two part fantasies by Morley which I played with my father in a concert before we left America. I can always remember how beautifully he played the harpsichord and how I loved the exquisite "Rappel des Oiseaux" by Rameau. Nathalie, Rudolph and I used to sing with great enjoyment the traditional songs of

France. Life at that time seemed idyllic; but we had always been told by A.D. that France was the most wonderful country in the world. So when we knew that we were going to live there, we were greatly excited at the prospect. Naturally, the reality was rather different from what we had expected. When we first arrived, we stayed at a pension which was also a boarding-school, and Nathalie and I were put with the boarders in a long dormitory with a jug and basin at one end and the rule was that the face and neck were to be washed every day and the feet once a week! The milk was always burnt and we heard that the gardener chased the cook round the garden with a knife! So we were not sorry when the time came to leave. Meanwhile, A.D. had been finding the pleasant little house at Fontenay-sous-Bois where we afterwards lived and where Carl was born. It had a walled kitchen garden and a "jardin de plaisir".

When we came to live in France we worked more seriously at our music and A.D. in his enthusiasm was inclined to expect rather much from us sometimes. I still have a dog-eared *Almaine* with double stops which had to be abandoned and which I should find quite difficult even now.

We much enjoyed the great occasion when we supplied a musical interlude during Lois Fuller's dance performances and Rudolph (aged 6) played the virginals, Nathalie (aged 7) the tenor viol and I myself (aged 8) the treble viol in such pieces as "Lord Zouche's Masque" and "John come kiss me now" with variations. I found the troupe of little girls who danced barefoot, waving coloured scarves, fascinating; but was puzzled by the odd names like "Bobtail" and "Smuts" by which they seemed to be known.

We had heard so much about Le Mans, A.D.'s birthplace, that we looked forward to going there to see his mother and stepfather; the river where he went boating as a boy; the crowded market where the Breton women still wore their lace *coiffes*, and the beautiful Cathedral with its jewel-like stained glass. A.D. told us many stories of his early life. One that appealed to us was of the occasion in his boyhood when it had been arranged for him to go to the dentist (no doubt a particularly fearsome experience in those days). He had been secretly smoking, so he resourcefully went to his old nurse, Fanchon, and asked her for a garlic sandwich. This he consumed before setting off, with the result that when he arrived for his appointment, the dentist roared: "Take that boy away!" There were

also the descriptions of the chocolate factory belonging to the Aunt Bobelin where the finest "Pralinés" in the world were made and where one was allowed to sample the chocolates. A story that I found delightful was of a visit he made to a village Curé, probably to tune the organ with his grandfather, where, on a hot summer's day, they were regaled by the Curé with fragrant Alpine strawberries, both red and white, picked in his garden, warm from the sun, and served with wine.

For A.D., his garden was always a theme in his life second only to music. When we came to Hampstead, the garden was replanned French fashion. During the war he constructed a little hand cart for the collection of horse manure in nearby roads, for the garden. A lady, observing curiously, asked him what he was collecting, to which he replied with a bow: "Manure, Madam"!

It was in Hampstead that he started building a set of triangular portable virginals single-handed and he needed assistance. So we started learning the practical work of instrument making. Being the eldest and at least twelve years old, I was allowed to use the circular saw. I also worked on jacks in company with Nathalie, while Rudolph ground tuning pins on the mechanical grindstone, dropping any pins that went wrong down a gap between the floorboards! Pay for this work might be half-a-crown on some occasions, or only a chocolate-drop on others. A.D. always explained with great care how a piece of work should be done, and would construct beautiful little "jiggs" for special processes.

He was, in fact, more patient when teaching instrument *making* than playing. Rudolph being practically a born harpsichordist, any attempts by Nathalie and me to play a keyboard instrument appeared elementary. I well remember a joint harpsichord lesson, our first and last, in which we were so "stupid" that we were more or less thrown out of the room. It was a curious thing that, although he taught other pupils most methodically, we, his children, were supposed to be born with the knowledge, an assumption which often caused puzzling difficulties!

We now played in five and six part fantasies for viols, with an added player, since Carl was still too young. We also sang to A.D.'s lute accompaniment, for which one might be summoned unexpectedly at any time. Later on, when I specialised more in singing to the lute, even after I was married I was liable to this sudden summoning (if within reach) when I might be given a newly discovered song and shown the appropriate

ornamentation, since he did not find the modern type of voice either in keeping with the style, or capable of executing the ornaments accurately.

We did not always enjoy the tasks we were given. For instance, when we came to Haslemere, with all the wide countryside and woods, we might be sent collecting leaf-mould for the garden or dandelions for salads. This last, being particularly tedious, I had the idea of writing a lament on the subject. Rudolph set the words to music, I singing the top and playing the bass on the violone while Nathalie played a middle part and Rudolph himself took the harpsichord. After some rehearsal we performed this magnificent work for A.D., who was much amused and recorded it in his diary on Sunday, March the 9th, 1919, as follows: "Rodolphe compose un air comique sentimentale au sujet de la saison des pissenlits. Cécile chante et joue le violone. Lili fait une partie de remplissage. Rod. joue le clavecin—Tres drôle." (See illustration.) The result was that we were let off this task for some weeks and A.D. sowed a row of cultivated dandelions from France in the garden, descendants of which I still come across growing wild in the neighbourhood.

It was when I was about fourteen that A.D. first put a solo Suite for treble viol on the programme of one of the yearly series of concerts always given at the hall of the Art Workers' Guild. He said: "If she can't do it well enough, I shall play it myself." It was the Première Suite by De Caix d'Hervelois and when the time came I was allowed to play it. Great was my surprise when, in the course of the concert I had played my Suite (accompanied by A.D. and Nathalie), at the end I heard someone exclaim: "Marvellous, Charming", and out of the audience came the 'cellist Rubio, who kissed me on both cheeks. This incident established my reputation and I was given another Suite to study. However, when A.D. heard me playing the passages which came above the frets, he said: "This is really composed for the *Pardessus de Viole*, and you must play the *Pardessus*." So the little Guersan viol which had been used as a treble was restored to its proper status, re-strung as a *Pardessus*, and has been heard ever since in some of the delightful 18th century French music composed for it.

Whenever a new instrument was required, A.D. was wont to pick one of us to learn it. In this way I came to play the violone, the rebec and the Mediæval harp, Carl came to add the recorder and viola d'amore to his other instruments, whilst Nathalie took up the Lyra viol and violoncello piccolo, to mention but a few of the many instruments added.

There was never a time when he was not working on some new line of research and at the same time devoting time to growing such things as melons and sweet corn, and taking long walks in the surrounding countryside during which he would almost always find something of interest, such as chanterelle mushrooms, to be added to an omelet. I have a little snapshot of him dressed for such an expedition and stopping to talk to my two sons (his first grandchildren) Christopher and Arnold, in whom he took great pride.

During his last serious illness, he had a sudden temporary recovery, when he immediately started working on a mediæval song with lute and rebec accompaniment. I was summoned in the usual manner to try it with him. It was just like old times and I can still picture him as he sat there. But alas! by next morning he had had a relapse and in no time he was gone. Inevitable as it was, it left us with a sense of loss difficult to express. In his rare moments of discouragement he would sometimes quote a saying of his old nurse in dialect: "C'quon a d'mal et puis mourri." Well, I do not think this could ever apply to him. He set in motion a movement which has influenced music the world over, and it is for each one of us to carry it on.

LE MANS

BY

NATHALIE DOLMETSCH

LE MANS, the town where my father was born, always drew him back to visit it — Le Mans itself and the presence of his mother (my grandmother), who lived in the rue de la Préfecture, close to the old Dolmetsch music shop.

It was not always possible for my mother to accompany him on these nostalgic trips on account of ties at home and the management of workshop affairs. So one of us children was usually sent to keep him company and, perhaps because of my supposed resemblance to my mother, I was generally the chosen one.

Sailing from Southampton, we would cross to Cherbourg or St. Malo and then make our way by one of those slow third class trains known in France as *trains omnibus* which used to stop at every station; this, partly for economy, but chiefly because my father enjoyed mixing with the French people, joining in the conversation and taking part in the happy communal life of the third class compartment, without ever seeming to notice the prevalent smell of garlic, sausage and hot humanity.

Returning to his native land always renewed my father's vitality and by the time he reached his mother's house he seemed to become younger and more vigorous.

After the first joyful greetings, my grandmother would burst into the flow of talk which was to continue until our departure. She was a little person when I knew her, but had been small even before she became bent with age. I remember her as a little old lady with iron grey hair and her black eyes sparkled as she entertained us with tales of my father's childhood: of how he was such a small baby that the prepared baby clothes were much too large and he had to be dressed in the clothes of her doll (which she was young enough to have preserved); of the occasion when a certain princess visited Le Mans, and how, when "le petit Arnold" was presented to her in his blue velvet suit, she had exclaimed that he was such a pretty little boy that she really must kiss him!

The only drawback to my grandmother's anecdotes was that she repeated them many times, sometimes three times in the same day, and after a while my father and I would both feel the need for space and air and would rush out for long

walks across country or along the banks of one of the two rivers. His favourite relaxation was to take a rowing boat on the Sarthe, having first bought a kilo of the small local white grapes to refresh us as we rowed. I don't remember what we talked about; probably we were happy to enjoy the silence! He taught me to row where he himself had been taught by his father. He used to tell us children that my grandfather Dolmetsch was an impatient and choleric man and that these kindly-meant Sunday outings usually ended in tears.

On one evening, I remember, we came home from an expedition, to hear the light sound of the old piano in my grandmother's little "salon", the room where she kept the family treasures. Finding her playing one of the waltzes of "le cousin Victor" (waltzes which had had quite a vogue in their time), my father went to fetch his violin which he generally brought with him, and after joining her for a while to the support of Victor's waltzes, he went on to play some of his own violin pieces, while she accompanied him dexterously on the piano, and we enjoyed a happy musical evening.

These periodical visits to Le Mans were never complete without an expedition to the cemetery which lies outside the town. My father would hire an open carriage (as long as they were still to be had) and my grandmother would sit in it like a queen, bowing regally to her acquaintances as we made our leisurely progress. She was a wonderfully turned-out old lady in her best black clothes of the finest cloth, but not in the latest style, for they had been reserved for many years for such state visits.

An indispensable part of the proceedings was the flowers which we brought for the family graves. I remember that on one such occasion, on a lovely spring day, I had gone on ahead to the market place to buy armsful of lilac, white and purple and deliciously scented; I was then picked up by the carriage. On arriving at the cemetery, my grandmother, leaning on my father's arm, led us to all the family graves and directed me as to where to lay the flowers, white for the unmarried girls and purple for the others. There we saw the grave of my father's old nurse, Fanchon, at a respectful distance from those of the family, and of my little namesake, Lili, who had died at the age of four during the Franco-Prussian war. Finally, with a sigh, my grandmother turned back to the carriage with the feeling of a duty well done. This trip was always her greatest treat!



GROUP OF THE FOUR CHILDREN AND PARENTS



NATHALIE AND CECILE DANCING

"LA SAISON DES PISSENLITS"

(A Lament)



O! la sai-son des pis-sen-lits com-mence, Hé-
 las, Hé-las, Hé-las, Hé-las, Mal-heur! Nous
 a-vons à pas-ser des heures et des heures à cueil-lir des
 herbes qui font mal au cœur. Hé-las, Hé-las, Hé-
 las, Mal-heur! Hé-las, Hé-las, Hé-las, Mal-heur!

WORDS BY CECILE. TUNE BY RUDOLPH.

(All that survives of this ensemble.)

See page 21.

When in England, my father always used to praise all things French and exclaim at the stupidity of the English; but after a few days in France, he could be heard explaining the advantages of the English ways of doing things. It always seemed to me that, much as he enjoyed his French interludes, he was happy after a while to return to England, his adopted country.

SPECIALISING IN VERSATILITY

BY

CARL DOLMETSCH

IT FREQUENTLY COMES to pass that an event or set of circumstances, not of one's own making, leads one into pursuits which ultimately become major activities and enthusiasms in one's life. It was characteristic of Arnold Dolmetsch that through the needs created by his researches he would propel unwilling "victims" into achievements for which they had subsequent reason to be grateful. Practically everyone who came into contact with him experienced the irresistible "*you shall do it*", often accompanied by the pointing of a compelling finger. It was therefore natural that the members of his immediate family, by reason of proximity, were most frequently involved, often at times when life seemed already too short to serve present interests to the full.

Of the many such incidents involving myself, the only one I remember that I did not do my utmost to avoid occurred when I was four years old, my professional commitments at that time having not yet assumed very great proportions! My father produced a setting of a Pastorella by Frescobaldi, which he scored for recorder, lute and viols. Six performers were required for this arrangement and the other five members of the family were already involved. In the temporary absence of a handy pupil to take the sixth part, it was decided that I should fill the rôle. I well remember being shown how to hold a bow and standing up to a bass viol, which to me was much like a double-bass is to an adult. My function was to play tonic and dominant drones, relying only on my ear to tell me when to change from one note to the other in the different sections of the piece.

No special emergency beyond normal needs seems to have been responsible for my beating rhythms on a tabor in "broken consorts", nor yet when I began to play the tenor viol in six-part consorts of viols—a privileged central position which I held many years in the performance of complicated contrapuntal fantasies, learned in the following order:—Weelkes, Leatherland, Byrd, Peerson and Lawes, after which other names followed too rapidly to be recalled in sequence.

At the age of ten, I was informed that the violin was to be my next instrument, in order that I might play 2nd violin to my father in Bach concertos, and in sonatas for two violins by

William Young, Henry Purcell, Corelli and Bach. I recall feeling for the first time somewhat overwhelmed and protesting that I had more than enough to do already. The occasion to play my newest instrument came a year later, when a Liverpool violinist who was to have taken the 2nd violin part in Bach's D minor harpsichord concerto (in which my brother, Rudolph, aged sixteen, was soloist) was at short notice unable to fulfil the engagement. I therefore travelled to Liverpool with the rest of the family to play both violin and viol in a series of concerts at the Rushworth Hall. For quite a time afterwards it seemed that the violin would be my principal instrument and it was with a certain dismay, at the age of fifteen, that I reacted to the next crisis, which was to lead me to the instrument now most closely linked with my name. In the previous year I had learnt to play the recorder in a small way, first, so that I could voice and tune the hand-made recorders whose future development my father had placed in my hands; and second, in order to play simple parts in the first modern recorder consorts included in the 1926 Haslemere Festival, for which event my father had added descant, tenor and bass instruments to the trebles he had been making since 1919. The 1927 Festival was to include a repeat performance of the 4th Brandenburg Concerto, in which my brother and a pupil were to play the recorders as they had the previous year. As the date of the performance approached it became known that the second recorder player would not be available. Somewhat more dramatically than usual, my father uttered his characteristic "you shall do it", handed me the part and a recorder and dispatched me off to practice. At one stage it seemed to me that the task was insuperable, but he would not hear of my giving up the attempt and my enforced perseverance brought its eventual reward.

It is quite impossible in an article of this length to speak in detail of the numerous other crises in which I found myself involved and to most of which I was to be ultimately grateful.

In 1928, for instance, Beecham was to conduct a performance of Handel's "Ode to St. Cecilia", and called for a lute to play the obligato in "The Soft complaining Flute". My father bade me learn the part and take his favourite Italian lute to play the required obligato in the Leeds Festival of that year. In 1928 too I was playing the tenor violin in five-part concertos by Albinoni. Of other instruments I had to play at short notice, I recall the viola in a performance of the 6th Brandenburg Concerto, in which work the previous year I had been deputed to play the harpsichord *continuo* while my brother who

would normally have done this was playing one of the two *viola da gamba*. The *viola d'amore* was learnt for a performance of *Aria 32—"Erwäge, Erwäge"*, from the *St. John Passion*. In 1931, my father taught me to tune harpsichords, when my collaboration in concerts with Donald Tovey carried with it the responsibility for keeping his Dolmetsch harpsichord in tune. Again, in 1934, it was the turn of the tenor rebec, which had to be learnt for my father's transcriptions of Pérotin.

It was Malvolio who pompously averred that "... some have greatness thrust upon them". In my case, it was musical instruments, and they certainly were thrust upon me! However, as is so often the case, what were regarded as misfortunes have turned out to be blessings in disguise, and I can now, with complete sincerity, say that I have no regrets, but rather a feeling of immense gratitude to the wisdom of my father and teacher.

A FEW PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

CONTRIBUTED BY

RUTH DANIELLS

IT WAS NOT UNTIL the last years of his life that I met Arnold Dolmetsch personally; but, years before that, merely to be one of the audience involved a kind of personal relationship. How he scolded us for our good! "You will not understand this", he announced before one of the bolder viol consorts, "but to hear it will be good for you—so we shall play it twice".

Nor was the scolding unfriendly when he admonished the listeners during a group of viol consorts. "You should not be here at all. You should be playing this music yourselves!" That advice was not so easy to follow in those days, when the means were not as readily available as they are now; but the luckiest members of the audience were those of us who were able, sooner or later, to prove for ourselves the soundness of his words.

Sometimes we were not scolded, but taken into his confidence. During an intimate evening at the Art Workers' Guild hall, a second playing of an intricate consort went wrong twice in exactly the same place, the cause soon being traced to a mistake in one of the manuscript parts (all the parts, in those days, were of course in manuscript). Turning to the audience, he exclaimed, "What I cannot understand is, *why did we get it right the first time?*"

He would not allow applause after viol consorts, or after he had been playing the clavichord. "Why do you want to make that stupid noise?" he would ask; "You should go home with the heavenly music in your ears, not that imbecile clap-clap!"

Finding myself one day with a fellow-American in the garden at Jesses, I had my first random glimpse of one of his many interests outside music. We were admiring the well-grown sweet-corn, not a common sight in England before the second world war. Arnold Dolmetsch explained that he started it in pots on his bedroom window-sill; "but," he added, "you cannot do that if you are one of these Fresh-Air Fiends!"

One of my last and happiest recollections of him is of a Sunday morning during the 1938 Festival. My father had asked for and received permission to take a few amateur cinema-shots in colour of him and the family. When the day came,

Arnold Dolmetsch was feeling rather tired and unwell, and doubted if he could go through with it, though he was already ceremoniously dressed for the occasion. However, he allowed himself to be conducted into the garden, called for his clavichord to be brought out there, and gradually, as his interest was aroused, he forgot his fatigue. He sent for his treasured Croix de la Légion d'Honneur to be pinned on. Sitting at the clavichord playing tunes for his little granddaughter Louise to dance to, he became so absorbed in watching her and talking to her that soon he had forgotten both his fatigue and the camera and played on and on, tirelessly, his face smiling and gentle, lighted up with his joy in the child, the dance and the music.

AN ESTIMATION OF ARNOLD DOLMETSCH'S LIFE WORK

WRITTEN THIRTY YEARS AGO

BY GERALD R. HAYES

IT IS TRUE that in one sense a tradition of the instruments had never entirely died out. C. F. Abel may have been the last to write for the viola da gamba, but it is highly improbable that he was the last one to use it in the 18th century in England... In France, Auguste Tolbecque, a famous cellist... was playing the viola da gamba seventy years ago (i.e. circa 1858), and others followed him; but it was treated rather like a cello and used, of course, without frets... But if the instruments had not been entirely forgotten, their true technique had been lost and their proper music neglected.

Much credit is due to a later group of players, of which St. Georges, father and son, and Mr. van der Straeten were the best known... All of these, however, were busy professional men, and what they did was a labour of love to be carried on in such scant leisure as their occupations afforded. And even here the true concerted music for the viols was untouched; their attention appears to have been confined to the viola da gamba and viola d'amore. It was not like this that an art, so completely lost as was the instrumental music of the past, was to be recovered.

A research of this magnitude calls for a lifetime of single-hearted devotion, but even that devotion would be wasted unless it represented the energies of the mind of a critical scholar, a born musician, and an accomplished craftsman. The laborious searching for, and collating and recording of, information in old manuscripts and books is useless unless the student has a clear-sighted and unbiassed appreciation of the musical value of what he reads; nor is even this sufficient where instruments are concerned, for the importance of many points would escape even a sympathetic seeker if he had not a keen sense of the constructive value of the details found in his materials, both literary and in the instruments that have been preserved. Such various faculties assist and correct each other, and only by some combination working in harmony could the truth at length be brought to light.

It is not then surprising that the world had to wait until the last decade of the 19th century for this revelation and it increases understanding of those who made some advances in the right direction. But when every possible credit has been

given to the earlier attempts, it is now realized that practically all our knowledge of the true practice of old instrumental music rests on the life-work of one man—Arnold Dolmetsch.

His profound and exhaustive scholarship has been guided by a unique association of a fine craftsmanship and a thorough musical education . . . Forty years ago (i.e. circa 1888), when such music was unsuspected, he was finding a rich mine of beauty in the Consorts of Viols and in the lute . . . His recovery of the construction of the instruments of the period is well known, but it is difficult for us today to appreciate the load of preconceived ideas he had to discard before even realizing the fundamental difference between the viol and the violin!

The important thing about his work for us today is that the whole of his long life has been devoted to this subject with the guiding belief that the music was of the utmost value, accompanied by the realization that it could never take its proper place in art unless it was interpreted with truth to contemporary intentions. It is this humanistic spirit that distinguishes his studies from those of the academic scholar; and he has that rare courage that can progress beyond conclusions once reached.

From "*The Treatment of Instrumental Music*"

(O.U.P. 1928).

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

BY

EDWIN HERRIN

OTHERS, FULLY QUALIFIED to do so, have written of Arnold Dolmetsch as Musician, a thing for which I have not competence, but one and all consistently overlook his supreme title to fame, the thing which conditioned his real relation to music, which dominated his mind and art and fused his being with that ardour which defeat could not touch.

The phenomenon of musical decline oppressed him: that the dark night which had descended on the musical world after the golden age terminating with Bach was, after all, a night only to be followed inevitably by a new day. In that age, as History made clear to him, Music was the birthright of all: it was not reserved for public performance, it was a domestic art produced by fireside consorts of a few instruments in every home—from which neither old nor young was excluded: it was not the “profession” of a few skilled technicians who, by some rare natural endowment or by dint of life-long immolation on the altar of drudgery developed a superb, almost miraculous, facility. Everyone could sing and everyone, almost without exception, could play.

This, he was persuaded, is as true now as then, and musical faculty, far from suffering atrophy, has merely fallen into desuetude and is revivable. This claim appears to be fully verified by the companies of youthful players he recruited from quite amateur sources.

Of course, Dolmetsch was captivated by the beauty, the rich tonal harmony and quiet serenity of Elizabethan music; but he was still more heartened by the fact that, in addition to all these things, the music was in compass and character such as did not demand virtuosity for its rendering but was clearly designed for universal performance. The same dominating consideration applied with even greater force to the instruments: the Lute, the Love-Viols (*Viola d'Amore*), whose lost secrets he re-discovered and whose blithe magic he restored to the world, were invaluable, not primarily for their sweetness or dulcet tones, nor even because, physically, they were so lovely and beautiful to look on: but first because they and their fellows the Recorders, Clavichords, Virginals, Harpsichords were the music-making implements found in every household and were the proud possession of everyone, high and low, rich and poor alike, of normal musical taste and capacity.

But Dolmetsch was by no means exclusively a Musician: as thinker and observer he was concerned with things of wider

import, with the welfare and happiness of human beings, to be secured, as he so clearly perceived, by raising the level of culture, primarily, of course, in matters musical, since music was his medium, though he was by no means indifferent to the need for this in the largest æsthetic sense: he saw clearly and probed deeply the causes of our æsthetic maladies and, once convinced of his course, possessed the boldness, simplicity and directness to follow his star even though it led into the wilderness.

He relied little on rhetoric: his lectures invariably took the form of improvised talks salted, however, with his native, puck-like humour. However strongly the intellect reinforced his case, his faith in dialectic was brilliantly limited. Did he not possess quite infallible arguments in his beloved instruments and in his juvenile Orchestras modelled in every respect on the orthodox Bach pattern? Where reasoning was impotent these were unanswerable.

His technique was to woo, to conquer by delight. The ear was first captivated by sheer tonal magic; next the eye was beguiled by the cunning beauty of the instrument; finally, the fancy was gripped by the, at first, appalling but, later, perfectly intriguing notion of actually reproducing such ravishing sounds for one's self. This technique was infallible: the pupil liked the music, he liked the absence of scoring, he liked the freedom to play what he liked without years of maddening, soul-destroying servitude to the treadmill of "scales" and disgusting, physical hand-drill: he liked producing such likeable sounds for himself, he liked to hold the violin in such sensible posture as between the knees, he liked the artful aid of the frets*, he liked the simple obvious method of bowing with the wrist from the elbow, he liked the simplicity of the whole plan: above all, he liked the subtle, sensuous appeal, the first dawning of beauty in sound-production, the first awakening of the æsthetic rapture, mystery and magic of actual music-making.

If the greatest proof of man's affinity with the creative spirit of life lies in the overmastering impulse to produce for ourselves the things which have profoundly moved us to the perception of the beautiful; and the conviction that only in the culture of this impulse shall we create whatever of charm or serenity the miracle of life holds for us—then, indeed, was Arnold Dolmetsch justified of his labours.

From *The Weekly Review*, April 25, 1940.

* But, as Arnold Dolmetsch himself wrote in 1929: "When they (the pupils) grew big enough, they put their violins under the chin. The frets were removed one by one when their ears and fingers were sufficiently trained."—Ed.



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